

Mike Burns

From: John Anderson
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2011 12:35 PM
To: John Anderson
Subject: Georgia Statement on Espionage Case July 22, 2011
Attachments: Georgia Statement on Espionage Case 072211.docx

Greetings all. Below and attached is a statement issued today by the Government of Georgia on developments in the espionage case. Have a good weekend. John

MSD/CES/REGISTRATION UNIT
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Tbilisi City Court Approves Plea Agreement of Four Photographers Guilty of Espionage

Photographers Receive Suspended Sentences & Are Released on Probation; Additional Evidence Made Public

Tbilisi • July 22, 2011

On July 22, 2011, Tbilisi City Court approved a plea agreement between the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and four photographers charged with espionage—Zurab Kurtsikidze, Giorgi Abdaladze, Irakli Gedenidze, and Natia Gedenidze. At a hearing open to the public, during which the four confessed to their crimes in the presence of their lawyers, the Court decreed suspended sentences: three years to Zurab Kurtsikidze, four years to Giorgi Abdaladze and Irakli Gedenidze, and 18 months to Natia Gedenidze. All four were immediately released on probation.

The photographers had been detained on July 7 and charged with espionage under article 314 (par. 1) of Georgia's Criminal Code. An investigation by the Prosecutor's Office established that: Zurab Kurtsikidze and Giorgi Abdaladze were at different times recruited by the Main Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Defense of Russia (GRU); together with Irakli Gedenidze and Natia Gedenidze, they illegally obtained classified documents containing state secrets and other confidential information, subsequently passing them on to the GRU in exchange for financial payments. The evidence obtained during the course of the investigation included electronic copies of classified documents retrieved from the defendants' personal computers and electronic data storage devices; mobile phone records; and testimonies made by the defendants in the presence of their lawyers.

The Prosecutor's Office consented to the plea agreement after taking into account that the defendants confessed to their crimes, cooperated with the investigation, and shared important information related to Georgia's national security—including the identities of other Georgian citizens secretly employed by the GRU, the methods of operation and means of communication used by Russian spy networks in Georgia, as well as other information. The Prosecutor's Office then submitted the plea agreement to Tbilisi City Court for approval.

In light of the major public interest in the case, the Prosecutor's Office has decided to release additional evidence from the investigation, including redacted versions of many of the classified documents found on the personal computers and data storage devices of Gedenidze, Abdaladze and Kurtsikidze, as well as phone records of calls between Kurtsikidze's mobile telephone number and the numbers of two Russian military intelligence (GRU) officers, Anatoly Sinitzin and Sergey Okrokov. (Portions of the text in the released files are

deliberately obscured in order to ensure the confidentiality of classified information). Other documents, including the blueprints of the Presidential Palace, cannot be published due to national security interests.

During the search of the apartment and personal items of Irakli Gedenidze, investigators found electronic copies of classified documents related to the official visit to Georgia on July 4-6, 2011, of Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, which included information on security measures jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Protection Special Service of Georgia. Gedenidze also was in possession of documents containing rosters of all the office cleaners at the Presidential Palace and of the employees of the State Procurement Agency. (*Download files seized from Gedenidze:* http://justice.gov.ge/files/fotografebi/Gedenidze_irakli.zip)

In the apartment of Giorgi Abdaladze, investigators found electronic copies of official stenographic records of meetings held in Georgia on July 13-14, 2011, between the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mamediarov, and President Mikheil Saakashvili, Prime Minister Nika Gilauri, and Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze. Abdaladze also was in possession of rosters of Georgian citizens employed at the United Nations, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe. (*Download files seized from Abdaladze:* http://justice.gov.ge/files/fotografebi/Abdaladze_giorgi.zip)

The electronic copies of documents seized from **Gedenidze** and **Abdaladze** also were discovered by investigators among **Kurtsikidze's** personal files. In addition, **Kurtsikidze** owned copies of documents that included regular joint action plans of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Protection Special Service (*Download files seized from Kurtsikidze:* http://justice.gov.ge/files/fotografebi/Kurtsikidze_zurabi.zip)

The phone records of calls showing that Zurab Kurtsikidze's mobile phone number (99 496255) was in contact with the phone numbers of GRU officers Anatoly Sinitisin (99 954162) and Sergey Okrokov (99 987426) were obtained after a search warrant was issued by Tbilisi City Court Judge Giorgi Arevadze (Order no. 3965/11-S). (*Download mobile telephone communications data:* http://justice.gov.ge/files/fotografebi/satelefono_qurcikidze.jpg)

Investigators determined that in 2004, the GRU gave Kurtsikidze a mobile phone number (99 496255) that was registered as of June 2004 in the name of a Georgian citizen, Medea Changaladze (born in 1938, residing in the town of Gori). In April 2006, Kurtsikidze re-registered this number under his own name. The mobile phone numbers used by GRU officers Sinitisin and Okrokov (99 954162 and 99 987426, respectively) were confirmed by the evidence gathered in another criminal case (No. 051450) launched by the Georgian MIA in 2005, including audio recordings of phone calls made by Sinitisin and Okrokov from these numbers. Sinitisin is wanted by Georgian authorities for organizing a terrorist act in the town of Gori on February 1, 2005, and for commanding the GRU spy network in Georgia; Sergey Okrokov is wanted for espionage.

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The Podesta Group provides representation to the government of Georgia. Additional information is on file at the US Justice Department.